NUMBER 2
FEB 1989
NEW FORMAT

THE

SANDMAN

MASTER of DREAMS

$1.50 US
$1.85 CAN
80p UK

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

GAIMAN • KIETH • DRINGENBERG

DON'T BE A *MORONIC* LUMP OF BLUBBERING, QUAKING, PATHETIC *LARD!* OPEN THE BOX! *UNWRAP* IT!

UH. B-BUT IT ISN'T MY BIRTHDAY...

OF *COURSE* IT ISN'T YOUR BIRTHDAY, POWDERBRAIN! YOU DON'T *HAVE* A BIRTHDAY!

UMM. NO. I, UH... *DON'T*, DO I?

NOW, *WHY* WOULD I GIVE YOU AN *EXPLODING* PRESENT?

WHAT KIND OF A *BROTHER* WOULD I BE IF I DID THAT?

MY KIND OF B-*BROTHER*.

THE, UH, THE KIND WHO *KILLS* ME WHENEVER HE'S, UH... *MAD* AT ME, OR *BORED*, OR JUST IN A *LOUSY* M-MOOD.

HEHH. LET'S LET FRATERNAL BYGONES BE BYGONES, *EH*, PUDGY? NOW...

...JUST OPEN YOUR BLASTED PRESENT!

YOU, UH, P-*PROMISE* IT ISN'T GOING TO, HMMM, *EXPLODE? PROMISE?*

BDUNK THOK! THOK!

WHAT WAS THAT?

I, UH, I *THINK* IT'S SOMEONE AT THE *DOOR*. WELL, *SOMETHING* AT THE DOOR, ANYWAY...

D-DON'T YOU THINK WE OUGHT TO, E-UH, HMMM, *WAIT* FOR A WHILE? I-UH-I,MM, WELL...

I MEAN... MAYBE IT'LL GO AWAY ON IT'S OWN...?

WHO'S THERE? WHO IS IT?

AAWURGK!

IT'S GREGORY.

M-MAYBE IT'S RUH-*REALLY* SOMETHING *PRETENDING* TO BE GREGORY... SOMETHING *BIG* AND NUH-*NASTY!*

DON'T BE *PATHETIC.*

WHY WOULD SOMETHING BIG AND NASTY *PRETEND* TO BE *GREGORY?*

BUT *JUST* TO BE ON THE *SAFE* SIDE, *YOU* CAN OPEN THE DOOR.

NOW, COME TO THINK OF IT, GREGORY *IS* *EXTRAORDINARILY* BIG AND NASTY IN HIS *OWN* RIGHT, ANYWAY.

IT *IS* GREGORY, ISN'T IT?

SPIT IT OUT, GULLY-GUTS! WHAT *IS* IT?

IT'S *HIM*, BROTHER.

HE'S *BACK*...

YEG. B-BUT. AWUH UH I-UH I-UH AWUH UR...

...THE P-*PRINCE* OF *STORIES*.

AURGK!

...help me...

...please...

IMPERFECT HOSTS

NEIL GAIMAN: WRITER
SAM KIETH & MIKE DRINGENBERG: ARTISTS
TODD KLEIN: LETTERER
DANIEL VOZZO: COLORIST
ART YOUNG: ASST. EDITOR
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR

I awake in the DARKNESS, too weak even to summon a LIGHT.

The air is musty, tired, OLD; it smells of lost dreams and rotten fabric.

Where AM I?

HELLO? M-MY LORD?

I'M ABEL, MY LORD. FROM THE, HMM, FIRST STORY. THE, ER, VICTIM.

You. I KNOW you. You're, uh...

...yes. I do remember you. I'm sorry. It's been so LONG. Where are we?

THIS IS MY B-BROTHER'S HOUSE OF MYSTERY.

GREGORY, UHM -- THAT'S CAIN'S GARGOYLE-- HMMM, HE BROUGHT YOU HERE. HE FOUND YOU IN THE, UH, SHIFTING ZONES.

Yes. I was on my way to the castle.

I-UH-I-UH-I'LL TELL CAIN YOU'RE AWAKE.

HE'S, UHMM, MADE YOU SOME FOOD.

I lay in the bed, feeling WEAKER than I have for eons.

REMEMBERING.

It was a DARK and STORMY NIGHTMARE...

Before my IMPRISONMENT, I knew, the journey would have meant NOTHING to me.

I would NOT even have NEEDED to TRAVEL.

But WEAKENED and EXHAUSTED, I stumbled through the FRINGES of the DREAMTIME...

The dream I used to bind Burgess in eternal waking used up the last of my strength...

And I was far too WEAK.

I do not know how long I remained there.

I remember the WIND on my FACE... staring down at the DREAMSCAPE below me...

I had to reach the GATES of HORN and IVORY... to reach my castle...

But the way was HARD.

And then... I was here.

AHEM!

GOOD EVENING, YOUR *HIGHNESS*, PRINCE *MORPHEUS*...

I'VE MADE YOU SOME *FOOD*.

WE'LL SOON HAVE YOU BACK ON YOUR *FEET* AGAIN.

You are CAIN, aren't you?

THAT'S *ME*, YER WORSHIP. PURVEYOR OF *PENNY* DREADFULS, *SHILLING* SHOCKERS, *BLOOD* AND *THUNDERS* AND *FUST-RATE* NIGHTMARES.

OR I *WAS*.

THINGS HAVE BEEN *STRANGE* SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE.

Tell me, Cain... do you POSSESS anything of MINE?

Anything I CREATED?

ANYTHING OF YOURS...? I WOULDN'T THINK SO... NO... *NO*...

YES YOU *DO*! UHHH *BOTH* OF US DO. OUR LETTERS OF, HMM, *COMMISSION*. REMEMBER?

THEY, UH, THEY, UH, HAVE HIS *SIGNATURE* ON THEM. HE MUH-*MADE* THEM.

YOU... *BUTTON BURSTER*! YOU LOW-DOWN, SPYING, PEEKING, PRYING, BUTTERFINGERED--

Fetch me these letters. Fetch me ANYTHING of mine.

I, UH, HAVE M-MINE ON ME, SIRE. AND *CAIN* HAS HIS, TOO.

I release something I CREATED before the dawn of TIME; re-absorb that fragment of MYSELF I placed inside it...

NOW. CAIN. Your turn.

HERE. TUH-*TAKE* IT.

"UHHH, MU-MY LORD, UH, IF IT'S NOT A-UHH, F-*FOOLISH* QUESTION...HMMM HMM, UH..."

"WHAT MY BRAIN-DEAD BROTHER IS SO *SPECTACULARLY* FAILING TO ENUNCIATE IS *THIS*:

"*WHERE* HAVE YOU BEEN FOR SO *LONG*, LORD? WHAT WERE YOU *DOING*?

"*WHERE* have I BEEN?...

"I have been imprisoned."

ARKHAM ASYLVM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE

YOUNG MAN, PLEASE DO NOT *PREVARICATE*. I WISH TO SEE MY *SON*, AND I WISH TO SEE HIM *NOW*.

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND MRS., ER--

DEE. ETHEL DEE.

YES. WELL, THIS IS *MOST* IRREGULAR, MRS. DEE. ARKHAM DOES *NOT* ENCOURAGE *VISITORS*.

THIS IS MY SON, JOHN DEE. I BELIEVE HE'S *IMPRISONED* UNDER HIS *"NOM-DE-CRIME"* OF DOCTOR DESTINY.

A *FOOLISH* BOY. I HAVE BEEN *SEARCHING* FOR HIM FOR ALMOST A *DECADE*.

WE *DO* HAVE A *PATIENT* OF THAT NAME, MRS. DEE, BUT THIS IS *MOST* IRREGULAR, AND I'M AFRAID--

=*MMMPH.*= YOUNG FELLOW, I AM *90* YEARS OF AGE. I *HAVEN'T* SEEN MY SON IN TEN YEARS, AND I HAVE TRAVELLED OVER 8000 MILES TO SEE HIM *TODAY*.

AND I *WILL* SEE HIM, OR MY *ATTORNEYS* WILL KNOW *WHY*.

WATCH THE STEPS! THEY CAN BE SLIPPERY.

I'M FLABBERGASTED YOU COULDN'T BRING JOHN UP TO SEE ME, MISTER HUNTOON.

IT'S DOC-TOR. DR. HUNTOON. WE CAN'T RISK LETTING HIM OUT. HE'S TOO DANGEROUS.

HE NO LONGER SLEEPS, OR DREAMS-- IN THE NORMAL SENSE OF THE WORD...

AND PHYSICALLY, HE'S QUITE DEBILITATED...

JOHN? IS THAT YOU?

I WOULD HAVE DREAMED OF YOU...

IF I COULD DREAM.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.

JOHN!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HIM?

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

MOTHER..?

MOTHER? YOU LOOK SO OLD. THINGS ARE SO STRANGE THESE DAYS.

MOTHER? THEY TOOK MY DREAMS AWAY FROM ME!

MRS. DEE? I'M AFRAID HE'S GETTING OVER-EXCITED. WE SHOULD GO.

MRS. DEE. SAY GOODBYE.

GUH-GOODBYE. I-UH-I-UH FEEL I OUGHT TO GIVE YOU GUH-GOOD ADVICE, AND I-UH-I-UH--

OHH, SHUT UP, SPONGE-WIT-- CAN'T YOU? GOODBYE, SIRE!

AARRWRUK!

WHY? HE'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH.

YOU, AH, AREN'T MUH-MAD AT ME, ARE YOU?

MAD? WHY SHOULD I BE MAD? I DON'T OWN YOU... YOU REFUGEE FROM A BLOODY SHAMBLES.

NOW... OPEN YOUR PRESENT!

UHHH, THERE HE GOES. SHUH-SHOULDN'T WE HAVE TOLD HIM? ABOUT THE CASTLE? ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE DREAMTIME?

BEYOND, outside my dreamworld there is INFINITE dust, infinite dark.

And the DREAMWORLD is infinite, although it is bounded on every side.

The way to the CENTER is a slow spiral. One passes the houses of mystery and secrets -- old WAY STATIONS on the frontiers of NIGHTMARE --

From THERE one charts a course NIGHTWARD until one reaches the GATES of HORN and IVORY. I carved them MYSELF, when the world was YOUNGER, and ORDER was NEEDED.

I HASTEN to the GATES.

The DREAMS that pass through the gates of IVORY are LIES, FIGMENTS, and DECEPTIONS. The OTHER admits the TRUTH. NO ONE guards the horned gate anymore. I remember the way of OLD.

Once through it I can SEE my CASTLE.

Through it I will be able to see...

...My Home...

BREAKS YOUR HEART, MY LORD, DOESN'T IT?

LUCIEN?

ONE AND THE SAME, MY LORD.

AT YOUR SERVICE, LORD, AS ALWAYS.

Get up. PLEASE, get up.

Lucien... What happened here?

WHAT HAPPENED? YOU ARE THE INCARNATION OF THIS DREAMTIME, LORD.

AND WITH YOU GONE, THE PLACE BEGAN TO DECAY, BEGAN TO CRUMBLE...

THE PROCESS WAS SLOW AT FIRST, MY LORD. THINGS IN THE DREAMWORLD BEGAN TO TRANSMUTE. I WAS AWARE OF IT IN MY LIBRARY...

SLOWLY, THE WORDS BEGAN TO FADE.

SOME TIME AFTER YOU VANISHED, MY BOOKS BECAME BOUND VOLUMES OF BLANK PAPER; THE NEXT DAY THE WHOLE LIBRARY WAS GONE.

I NEVER FOUND IT AGAIN...

IT'S BEEN A *STRANGE* CENTURY FOR ALL OF US, MY LORD.

"THE *RAVEN WOMAN* HAS DECAYED BADLY.

"SHE LIVES ONLY IN *NIGHTMARES*..."

MANY OF THE PALACE SERVANTS DISPERSED *BACK* INTO THE DREAM STUFF THAT *FORMED* THEM...

BRUTE AND *GLOB* VANISHED TWO-SCORE YEARS AGO.

I DO NOT KNOW *WHERE*.

"THE *FASHION THING* HAS BEEN *MANY* THINGS: FLAPPER... MOD... PUNK... SHE WAS A *'MAD MADONNA WITCH'* FOR A WHILE."

BLOOD AND *PERRIER*, GODDAMN IT!

MY OTHER BROOM IS A ROLLS ROYCE

'LAST TIME I SAW HER SHE WAS THE "MAD *YUPPIE* WITCH." BUT THAT *WAS* A YEAR AGO."

I have ENCOUNTERED Cain and Abel ALREADY.

AH.

YES, THOSE TWO... *DISTURB* ME. I MEAN, THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN WEIRD.

BUT SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE...

"THE WEIRDNESS HAS BEEN GETTING *WORSE*."

UH. AN EGG...?

SOMETHING HAS GONE SO *WRONG*. AND IT'S BEEN GETTING SLOWLY *STRANGER*... I'VE TRIED NOT. TO... DO IT TO YOU. SO MUCH.

UH, CUH-CAIN, IT, UH, SOMETHING'S, UH... THE EGG...

IT... IT'S *BEAUTIFUL!*

IT'S NOT JUST *ANY* EGG, YOU UNDERSTAND.

HURRM. I, MM, I THINK I'LL CALL HIM... *IRVING*.

IRVING??

YOU... *CAN'T* CALL IT *IRVING*.

NAMES FOR GARGOYLES *ALWAYS* BEGIN WITH A "G."

LIKE *GAZPACHO*-- OR *GORMAGON*-- OR *GLADSTONE*--OR *GANYMEDE*--OR-- OR--;pfah!<

B-B-BUT I, UH, *LIKE* IRVING!

I-UH-NO. NO, PLEASE. CAIN.

STOP IT. CAIN. PLEASE.

NO!

arwk?

So it's gone.

IT HURTS ME TOO, LORD.

Hurts. Yes...

Some power returns to me, simply by BEING here. But I placed too much of myself in the TOOLS. And they are GONE.

Stolen. Lost to me.

THE *THREE-IN-ONE* KNOW MUCH. *URTH, VERTHANDI,* AND *SKALD.* IF YOU ARE *STRONG* ENOUGH TO *SUMMON* HER...?

YES. Yes... I WILL call them.

Leave me, Lucien.

The DREAMWORLD, the DREAMTIME, the UNCONSCIOUS-- call it what you WILL -- is as much part of ME as I am part of IT.

And for the first time since my RETURN, for the first time in 70 years, I REACH out my substance...

...and I SHAPE the WORLD...

The CROSSROADS comes from a Cambodian farmer from his dreams of a new OX CART.

The GALLOWS comes from a young Japanese MOVIE BUFF, her head ROILING from a surfeit of old Hammer horror films...

The HONEY, the SNAKES, the CRESCENT MOON, all these are easy to find.

A BLACK SHE-LAMB is more difficult, but one DANCES in the dreams of a child in ADELAIDE, Australia. I take it to set the SCENE...

Still the set is incomplete. CLOTHO, LACHESIS and ATROPOS would come for LESS than this, but I need a BOON, and the THREE are fickle...

Dully the church bells ECHO and CLANG in the lonely darkness. TWELVE times...

DONG DONG DONG DONG DONG DONG DONG DONG DONG DONG DONG DONG

THERE.

It's MIDNIGHT.

The WITCHING Hour.

And they COME.

The ONE who is THREE.

The WE who are THEY.

The HECATEAE...

Welcome, ladies.

YOU LOOK SO *THIN*, MY DARLING. YOU HAVEN'T BEEN *EATING* PROPERLY, *HAVE* YOU NOW?

MORPHEUS. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.

HEHHH. HE *WANTS* SOMETHING!

Lady ATROPOS, you have found me out. I DO want something.

ATROPOS? NO. NOT NOW. YOU MIGHT AS WELL CALL ME THE *MORRIGAN*!

SHE'S *RIGHT*, MY DUCKS. MIGHT AS WELL CALL US *TISIPHONE, ALECTO,* AND *MAGAERA*--AND THAT TAKES US BACK, EH?

MIGHT AS WELL CALL US *DIANA, MARY* AND *FLORENCE*. HA HA! UH, SORRY.

For me, you will always be the three graces, ladies.

FLATTERER!

So what SHOULD I call you?

OOH, HE'S THE *CLEVER* ONE!

I'M *CYNTHIA*.

SHE'S MILDRED. I'M *MORDRED*. STUPID NAME. I *OUGHT* TO BE *MORGAINE*.

IT WASN'T *MY* FAULT. I JUST GOT THEM *CONFUSED*, WAS ALL!

DWEEP!

DWEEP!

WITCH QUEEN, you know of my imprisonment, of my TRAVAIL, of the TIME that was STOLEN from me--

THEY HAVE STOLEN *TIME* FROM YOU? WHAT OF *THAT*? YOU HAVE ALL THE TIME THERE *EVER* WAS!

SQUEEK

They stole MORE than time.

When I established this REALM I created TOOLS to administer it. My tools are LOST.

I need HELP.

HELP? *HEEE*-- LISTEN TO HIM! DID *YOU* HELP *US* AGAINST *CIRCÉ*?

BURP.

It doesn't matter. This is MY realm. It has LAWS. OLD laws. And the BEINGS in the world conform to the laws.

Just as you THREE obey your OWN laws. Could one of you exist apart from the other TWO?

I need THREE ANSWERS. You are bound by the LAWS to give me them.

AYE, ME DEARIE. *ONE* ANSWER THEN. *ONE* ANSWER FROM EACH OF US.

"MAIDEN, there was a POUCH of SAND. It was stolen from me."

"I SEE. Then your question, ALL-MOTHER My HELM -- what happened to it?"

"CRONE. A final question for you. My STONE, my DREAMSTONE, my RUBY MOONSTONE. Who has THAT now?"

"TRADED WITH A *DEMON*, MY DOVE, *MANY* YEARS AGO. LONG GONE FROM THE MORTAL PLANE."

"*HEE!* YOUR GEM PASSED THROUGH A *MOTHER* TO A *SON* WHO TAPPED ITS *DREAM MAGICKS* FOR HIS OWN ENDS...

"UNTIL IT--AND HIS DREAMS-- WERE TAKEN *AWAY* FROM HIM, BY THE SUPERHUMANS.

"ASK THE *LEAGUE OF JUSTICE* ABOUT ITS PRESENT WHEREABOUTS."

"AN ENGLISHMAN, JOHN *CONSTANTINE*. HE WAS THE LAST TO PURCHASE YOUR POUCH."

"He has it STILL?"

"WHICH demon?"

"ONE QUESTION, MY HONEYSUCKLE, AND ONE ANSWER."

"*ONE* QUESTION, *ONE* ANSWER. THE *RULES*, MY LORD."

"But where--? No, one answer only I know...

"Thank you, weird sisters."

HA-HA HAH HA HA! DID YOU HEAR *THAT*, MY SISTER-SELF?

OOO HOO HOHOH HOOO! "*THANK YOU*," HE SAYS! YOU DON'T *THANK* THE *FATES*, DREAMKIN!

AHAHAHAHAHAHA! *HEEEE!* WE *HAVEN'T HELPED* YOU!

YOUR TROUBLES ARE ONLY JUST *BEGINNING!*

Exhaustion BITES at my soul. I have answers of a SORT.

This will be an UPHILL quest...

HE FEELS SPLINTERED VERTEBRAE *GRIND* AS HE *CLIMBS*. EVEN THE *PAIN* FEELS BETTER THAN THE *COLD* OF *DEATH*.

ABEL HAD BEEN *DEAD* FOR A COUPLE OF *HOURS* NOW.

BUT HE WAS *STARTING* TO FEEL *BETTER*.

UHNN.

IT'S A LONG WAY BACK UP.

So.

Much has CHANGED, much is STRANGE on Earth since I was ripped from my dream home.

What first?

I DOUBT I am STRONG enough to go up against the HORDES of HELL.

Not YET.

To EARTH then. The ruby first? Or the pouch?

There are things I do not KNOW about this "JUSTICE LEAGUE." MORE than mere humans, eh...?

The ENGLISHMAN, then, JOHN CONSTANTINE. He has the POUCH--or he knows where it is.

And he is JUST a MAN.

I will visit Constantine. Regain my POUCH, and with the POUCH I will have the POWER to dare the GATES of Hell itself...

He is, after all, just a HUMAN. Just ONE human.

What could POSSIBLY go WRONG?

UHH... I'LL, UM, TELL YOU A *STORY*, GOLDIE.

I'M, AH, CALLING YOU *GOLDIE* AFTER A F-FRIEND OF MINE WHO WENT AWAY. BUT I'LL *THINK* OF YOU AS *IRVING* REALLY.

arwk!

IN MY *HEART*.

IT'S A *SECRET STORY*.

IT'S A STORY OF TWO *BROTHERS*. AND THEY, UH... THEY *LOVED* EACH OTHER VERY *MUCH*. AND THEY WERE ALWAYS *NICE* TO EACH OTHER.

NICE AND *KIND* AND B-*BROTHERLY*.

AND THE *ELDER* BROTHER WOULD *NEVER HURT* THE *YOUNGER* BROTHER. *NEVER*. AND THEY LIVED *TOGETHER* IN THE *SAME HOUSE*.

AND THEY WERE...

HNH. UHAH. TH-THEY WERE, UH, V-VERY *HAPPY*.

I'M SORRY. I WASN'T-- I'M N-NOT *CRYING*. I'M REALLY *NOT* CRYING.

"IT'S ONLY BLOOD, LITTLE BROTHER.

"ONLY BLOOD."

N · E · X · T :
"*DREAM A LITTLE DREAM OF ME...*"

SON OF ULTRON